



KEITH SAMUELS...
effective striker

MATCH DETAILS

Clapton: T. Moore; T. Smith, M. Cox; T. Mahon, B. Sprague, C. Watson; J. Chivers, B. Hales, A. Harris, C. Ballard, R. Kempton.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; V. Faulkner, C. Gale; J. Lailey, I. Rundle, D. Thomas; L. Worley, B. Baker, K. Samuels, A. Horseman, L. Merrick.

Rundle shines on a treacherous surface

Clapton 0, Wycombe Wanderers 0

A MISSED PENALTY five minutes from time by Wycombe's chief marksman, Tony Horseman, cost the Wanderers a deserved victory in this goal-less draw at the Spotted Dog, Clapton, on Saturday.

The stubborn home team salvaged a badly needed point by balancing their courage and urgency on a near impossible surface against the visitors' extra class.

It was a poor home crowd that watched Wycombe take the initiative as the teams battled to keep their foothold on a treacherous pitch.

Wanderers' new coach, Brian Lee, said after the game: "I was very satisfied with the form of the team considering the conditions. Unfortunately we were not in luck because we should have scored two goals."

Wycombe's grip on the exchanges was more decisive in the first half and early on Tony Horseman had the almost amusing experience of finding himself in front of an open goal, but unable to bring the ball under control on the frozen ground.

Len Worley, who with Keith Samuels was by far the most effective of the Wanderers' attack, constantly worried the home defence with his high crosses, but the tall Terry Moore, the busier of the goalkeepers, coped particularly well.

Midway through the first half, after Moore had been in action against Samuels and Worley,

Horseman was again unlucky with a splendid header which grazed the wrong side of an upright.

Chris Ballard, the small, highly mobile inside-left, was Clapton's principle menace. However, Ian Rundle was probably the best defender on the field and it was remarkable how a player of his size managed to keep his balance so effectively.

At the break, the blank scoresheet flattered Clapton, but they resumed the second period with the courage and improvisation of a team that innately knew that these were the kind of conditions in which footballing talents could easily become ice-bound.

Vince Faulkner, deputising for Temel, on holiday in the Midlands, gave a pleasing performance against Clapton's most effective strikers, Harris and Ballard.

The Wanderers were given a shock when from one of the best home moves John Chivers struck their upright with a goal-looking shot. Shortly after this, 'keeper John Maskell, who had seen very little action, brought off the save of the match from a Chris Ballard thunderbolt.

Not only did he perform a miracle in getting to the ball, but he also clutched it firmly. This was a save that cost him a painful hip injury. However, he hopes to be fit for the Oxford City match this week.

With time running out, an awkward bounce caused Brian Sprague to handle and as the teams held their frozen breaths, Horseman rocketed his spot kick over the top, thus providing Clapton with their first league point since they beat Hendon at home on November 2.